A POOR MAN'S RICHES

A POOR MAN'S RICHES

A BUNDLE OF LYRICS

BY

CHARLES DALMON

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WITH THE LOVE OF A LIFETIME

I DEDICATE MY POEMS

TO

CHANCTONBURY

THE MOST BEAUTIFUL

OF ALL

THE DOWNS

FOREWORD

WRITING in 1914, the late Edward Thomas said of Charles Dalmon, who was then known as the author of three or four volumes of poetry:

"It is rumoured that Mr. Charles Dalmon is still alive. For the sake of those who do not know that such a man was born, I must premise that he was, some time last century, at Old Shoreham, in Sussex. He claimed descent from William Damon, lute player to Queen Elizabeth, organist of her Majesty's chapel, and the first of English composers to set the Psalms of David in the vernacular to part music. On his mother's side he was descended from the Vinings of Somersetshire, a

family that had manorial rights before the Parliament wars against King Charles. He also asserted that he had Romany blood in his veins. He worshipped Tennyson; and he discovered himself. Tennyson made a beautiful remark to him: '*How can there be failure, if the divine speak through the human, be it through the voice of prince or peasant?*'

"Before Mr. Belloc and Mr. Kipling, Mr. Dalmon was a Sussex poet. Mr. E. V. Lucas, in *Highways and Byways in Sussex*, quotes from one of his poems; and lyrics from his pen are included in some half-dozen anthologies. He saw strange visions. For example, he saw Cupid and two or three other gods down in Sussex; and even in Chiswick he knew a dryad. She haunted a mulberry tree in an old garden. . . .

"Not content to give England some of the attributes of Arcady, he enriched Arcady with the birds and flowers, and some of the sweetest place-names of England, particularly of the Weald and

the Downs.' While Cupid walked between his lovers,

'The goldfinches sang in the sloe trees.'

This combination is one of his chief characteristics. In one of his drinking songs he bids the host to put rose-leaves in the beer. He delights to picture Pan at the Epiphany. Christ, the gods, and the faeries keep company in his books. In his day there were milkmaids in England, and one named Phyllis. His poem called 'Milking-Time at a Wealden Farm,' where she is mentioned, is one of the most perfect examples of Mr. Dalmon's mingling of what is rustic with what is pastoral and literary. The feeling is Arcadian, the detail English. The last verse [see page 68] really seems to prove that Mr. Dalmon knew what he was talking about when he used the word 'faery.' In his day, too, it was possible to flatter a beautiful lady by saying that when she came into her garden on a grey day the sunflowers turned towards her, and although I don't believe they

did, I would rather Mr. Dalmon told the lie than anyone else born since Waterloo."

To the foregoing it may be added that Mr. Dalmon is at the present time (1922) living in London; and that the present volume contains poems both old and new.

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DEW ON THE DOWNS

WHEN we are fast asleep,
Do pitying angels fly
Low down the sky
And weep?

For they must see, each day,
How, for the devil's toys,
We throw God's joys
Away—

Must see, from Heaven above,
How we, in lust and greed,
Pay little heed
To Love,

And through our lives forgo
All that would bring more near
God's Kingdom here
Below.

This knowing, hid from sight
While we are fast asleep,
They may so weep
All night,

That when the dawn appears,
Trees, flowers, and grass are set
All glistening wet
With tears.

JOY ON BEACHY HEAD

I STOOD one day on Beachy Head,
  When no one else was near,
And shouted, with my arms outspread,
  "*Dear God, I'm glad I'm here!*"

And, where the gulls went squealing round
  On their unfailing wings,
I knelt and kissed the holy ground,
  So sweet with thyme and things.

And then I laughed with all my might,
  So filled I was with joy—
As filled with innocent delight
  As when I was a boy;

As when it was my whim to chase
  New swallows flying low,
Or dig for pig-nuts in some place
  Where hares flopped to and fro,

Or poke a day-struck owl, and snap
  Dry twigs to make him stare,
Or set bright glowworms in my cap
  At Thakeham Cherry Fair!

WISTARIA BLOSSOMS

I SEE them on my trellises and walls
And straightway dream of distant waterfalls ;
But when to distant waterfalls I roam
I dream of my wistarias at home.

THE ANCIENT FAITH

O NEVER say that Pan is dead,
And every nymph and satyr fled,
Though, in these days of faithless pride,
Men seldom seek the countryside
On simple pilgrimage to find
The magic pipes Pan leaves behind !

I saw a cherry tree in flower,
All radiant from a passing shower ;
Against the deep blue sky it shone,
Most beautiful to look upon :
And from the midst of that fair tree
A dryad leaned and smiled to me.

No mortal maid was ever seen
So lovely as that cherry queen !
Hers was the face that sometimes looks
From pages of enchanted books
Where loving workmanship portrays
The beautiful of bygone days.

And if you doubt all ancient lore,
And say that satyrs are no more,
There's many a Sussex croft will show
The marks that, even children know,
Are made upon the grassy ground
By faeries dancing round and round.

O never say that Pan is dead!
But listen for his pipes instead;
And listen, listen till you hear
His merry music; sweet and clear
It comes to all the faithful who
Still listen as men used to do.

BALLAD OF THE EPIPHANY

WHEN Christ was born in Bethlehem,
  Pan left his Sussex Downs,
To see three kings go riding by,
  All in their robes and crowns ;
And, as they went in royal state,
  Pan followed them, unseen,
Though tiny tufts of grass and flowers
  Showed where his feet had been.

And when to Bethlehem they came,
  Birds sang in every tree,
And Mary in the stable sat,
  With Jesus on her knee ;
And while the oxen munched their hay,
  The kings with one accord
Placed gold and frankincense and myrrh
  Before their infant Lord.

And when Pan peeped upon the scene,
  The Christ Child clapped His hands,
And chuckled with delight to see
  The god of pasture lands ;

And Mary sang "*Magnificat*"
Above the kneeling kings,
And angels circled overhead
On rainbow-coloured wings.

And many a little singing bird
Flew past the open door
To hop and chirrup in the straw
About the stable floor ;
Wrens, robins, linnets, greenfinches,
And many another one,
Flew in to show good fellowship
With Mary's newborn Son.

Then Pan stood up and played his pipes
Beside the manger-bed,
And every little bird went near
And raised its faithful head ;
And one, most beautiful to see,
A fair and milk-white dove,
Arose and hovered in the air
To testify its love.

But when the kings looked up to find
Who made the piping sound,
They only saw white lilies shine,
Fresh-gathered, on the ground ;

And through the doorway, and beyond,
  A shaggy wild goat leap ;
And, in its gentle mother's arms,
  The Baby fast asleep.

A LEGEND OF CHERRIES

NOW St. Joseph's cottage stood
Close beside a cherry wood ;

And when all the trees grew red
With their dangling fruit, 'tis said,

Jesus, at His mother's gown,
Begged to have the branches down.

All in vain she made reply,
"*Mother cannot reach so high,*"

For He begged them none the less,
In His perfect childishness.

Joseph, in his workshop near,
Heard the Babe, and would not hear—

Heard the Blessed Virgin say,
"*Joseph, pull them down, I pray!*"

But he answered, with a frown,
"*Let His Father pull them down!*"

Then, to Joseph's wonderment,
Every cherry branch was bent;

And Our Lady sweetly smiled,
Picking cherries for her Child.

TROUT LEAPING IN THE ARUN WHERE A JUGGLER WAS DROWNED

HIS flesh and bones have long since gone,
But still the stream runs gaily on,
And still his merry ghost contrives
To juggle with his silver knives.

IN THE RIPE OCTOBER AT STEYNING

SOME worship in St. Cuthman's church,
And others in their various chapels,
But we will worship by ourselves
In orchards full of rosy apples.

For He who made their blooms in spring,
And set them in the sunny weather,
Now sweetens all their juiciness
For us to feast on them together.

So, we will stay away from church,
And pass the doors of all the chapels,
And go and laugh and sing with Him
Who loads our trees with rosy apples.

DISTANT TRAINS HEARD IN A SYLVAN SOLITUDE

I HEAR, as from deep sleep awaking,
Discordant sounds that slowly cease—
The waves of Civilization breaking
Along the holy shores of Peace.

COUNTRY INN SONG

O THE tap-room in the winter
When the ground is white with snow,
But the arbour in the summer
When Madonna lilies blow!
So, landlord, cool the cider,
And put rose-leaves in the beer,
And we'll drink with any fellow
Who will pay his footing here.

O a nightingale is singing
In the lilac on the lawn,
And we'll join him in his chorus
Till the day begins to dawn!
So, landlord, cool the cider,
And put rose-leaves in the beer,
And we'll drink with any fellow
Who will pay his footing here.

O the moon lights up the lilies
Through the blossoms on the lime,
But the rising sun is better
For a clock for closing-time!

So, landlord, cool the cider,
  And put rose-leaves in the beer,
And we'll drink with any fellow
  Who will pay his footing here.

AN ENGLISH SONG ABROAD

I HEARD Ben Jonson's "*Drink to Me Only*" sung
At a Provençal dance,
When the full moon paused, and hung
Low over France
Where fireflies sparkled in the air
Between the vines,
And red pomegranate blossoms seemed to share
The sunset hue of rosy wines.

The song was sweet with all that I had known
When I was still a lad,
And left me all alone,
Home-sick and sad:
I was a stranger in a land
Of alien mirth,
Thinking how beautiful the white cliffs stand
Along the loveliest shore on earth.

I longed to see my Sussex Downs again,
  To breathe the Sussex air,
And see a Sussex lane,
  And all the fair
Outspreading of the Sussex Weald,
  And hear the cry
Of Sussex peewits in a Sussex field
  Beneath a clear blue Sussex sky!

MIDSUMMER SUNRISE IN THAKEHAM PINE WOODS

WHEN stars were fading overhead,
  And clouds were all a rosy glow,
I found a magic path which led
  To Joyous Gard of long ago.

Pale tremulous mists were hurrying by,
  And blackbirds piping all about,
As from the sun-awaiting sky
  The last bright star went slowly out.

And up a long, dark fir-tree aisle,
  A choir of silver birch trees stood
In iridescent beauty while
  Enchantments came into the wood.

And memories made a picture there,
  And sunshine gave it life and sound,
With fragrance heavy in the air
  From burnet roses on the ground.

And over glistening flowers and grass,
  And under boughs of oak and fir,
I saw and heard a requiem mass
  For him who loved Queen Guenever.

ALMOND BLOSSOMS

A ROSY cloud of the dawn I see
Entangled there in the almond tree!

A SNOWFALL ON PLUM TREES AFTER THEY HAD BLOOMED

IT is, indeed, a pleasant thing to know
Twice-flowering plum trees in my garden grow!

ON HIGHDEN HILL

WHEN the winds have blown from the south,
  Between soft April showers,
They have brought a taste to my mouth
  As of honey from distant flowers,
With a sound to my ears as of one
  Singing beyond the sun;
And I, on the hill alone,
Have covered my eyes, and known
A sense of exquisite fear
Of faces of angels near.

THE ONLOOKER AT SOUTHWICK

I WATCH the children at their play
  Across the village green,
Remembering they are now to-day
  What I myself have been.

They are the blossoms of the earth,
  The ripples of the sea;
And he who would discount their worth
  Is not the man for me.

They are the songs of all the birds—
  The songs of sweetest cheer;
And better songs with better words
  No man shall ever hear.

O lucky democrats of joy,
  I watch and envy you!
But soon each happy girl and boy
  Must do as I now do.

If on some planet far away
   We are what we have been,
I'll hope to go once more and play
   Out on a village green.

A SUSSEX LEGEND

ABOVE the place where children play,
A window opens, far away,
For God to hear the happy noise
Made by His little girls and boys.

TRAILING MISTS IN THE CUCKMERE VALLEY

NOR book nor toy nor jewel seems
To please the lady of my dreams—
O, if I could but take to her
These veils of glistening gossamer!

RYE

I. The Rose Town

"SEE *Rye, and die and go to Rye,*"
Is what good folk in Sussex say :
See Rye and live, and live in Rye,
To me would seem the better way.

In many a town where I have been—
And they, indeed, are not a few—
I've said, "*You may be fair, and clean,*
But Rye is miles ahead of you!"

All towns have lovers, I suppose ;
And some have songs which praise them more ;
But give me Rye, that's like a rose
Set on the grey-green Sussex shore !

"*See Rye, and die and go to Rye,*"
Is what good folk in Sussex say:
See Rye and live, and live in Rye,
To me would seem the better way.

II. The Doors of Heaven

THE doors of Heaven are close to Rye—
That's one thing I do know;
And if I live there before I die
I'll hope to find it so.

The doors of Heaven are close to Rye—
The doors, and windows too;
And if I live there before I die
I'll hope to find it true.

The doors of Heaven are close to Rye—
How could they fail to be?
And if I live there before I die
I'll hope for eyes to see.

But if ever I have the eyes to see,
And should reach those doors above,
I know I should only long to be
Back down in the town I love.

III. A Legend of Rye

ABOVE this lovely, red-roofed town,
The architects of Heaven looked down,
And promptly altered all their plans,
And built their homes like mortal man's.

TO ONE LONG ABSENT

EACH moment lingers for a year ;
Each hour for centuries : I fear,
If you return not soon, my friend,
Time may exhaust itself, and end.

BALLAD OF THE SORROWFUL SATYR

THE nymphs who dwell in Muntham Wood
Have never heard or understood
Why nothing seems to vex or please
The satyr of the chestnut trees.

And now they shake their heads, and say,
"*He bites crab-apples every day,
To keep his ugly mouth awry
When any tempting sweet goes by!*"

Once, long ago, a lovely queen,
With white attending doves, was seen
Cajoling him to smile again;
But even that was all in vain.

And Pan himself has called in jest,
"*Ho, ho! you have a lonely nest!
Come, fellow! all the nymphs are fair;
And love is welcome everywhere!*"

Now, where the tallest brackens grow,
He crouches down, so still and low,
That passing wags sometimes declare
They only see a tree-stump there.

No other satyr used to be
So full of laughing life as he;
His laughter was the merriest sound
In all the sylvan glades around.

And none of all the goat-foot crew
Such hedgerow-hidden byways knew,
When, late at night, from field to field,
They skipped across the moonlit Weald.

They often followed him for miles,
Through gaps, and over gates and stiles,
And past old manor-houses, where
Suspicious watch-dogs sniffed the air;

And down through empty village streets,
Where yokels snored between their sheets,
While rival cats made hateful sounds
On their nocturnal meeting-grounds.

Sometimes an old grey church would show
Its chancel windows all aglow

From red glass lamps, hung there alight
Before the altar through the night.

Then, close together, they would creep
And mount the window-sills, to peep
And mark each aisle and pew and stall,
And vaguely wonder at it all.

But when a fear of dead men's bones
Came upward from the graveyard stones,
A sudden swish of squeaking bats
Would scare them off like frightened rats;

And, helter-skelter, they would fly
Away beneath the open sky,
And never pause until they stood
All safe and sound in Muntham Wood.

So, in that dream within a dream
Where pagan gods are still supreme,
The nymphs and satyrs live the life
That knows no money-grubbing strife-

The life all mortals used to know
In golden ages long ago;
The glad, free life of dance and song
Before the days of right and wrong.

One night no fellowship could please
The satyr of the chestnut trees ;
And soon his nettled mates all went
And left him to his discontent.

He moped awhile : then, with a shout,
Turned his perverseness inside out,
And blew his pipes, and played the clown
Along the path to Shoreham town.

And soon, where sea-pinks edged the shore,
He leapt upon the smooth sea-floor,
And waved his arms, and clapped his hands,
And danced a whirlwind on the sands.

The moon upon her lonely way
Looked back to watch his boisterous play,
And many a little twinkling star
Looked down upon him from afar.

But none of all his kindred chanced
To come upon him while he danced ;
And, where he looked, there seemed to be
No living creature in the sea.

At last he stopped ; the earth spun round ;
Then, near a tamarisk bush, he found,

Close-nested in a samphire heap,
A lovely mermaid, fast asleep!

His nut-brown eyes grew large and bright,
And flashed and sparkled with delight—
No milk-white nymph of Muntham Wood
Had ever seemed to him so good!

O, white as blooms of hawthorn show,
And delicate as wind-flowers blow,
Was she as she lay sleeping there,
With pearls entangled in her hair!

Beauty had ended every grace
In the still wonder of her face;
And all fair faces he had known
He worshipped in her face alone.

"*Mine; she is mine!*" he softly cried,
"*And I will carry her and hide*
Her safely in my foxglove bower
Upon my heap of mint in flower!"

And he could scarcely breathe, for fear
Some other satyr might be near,
As from her cold, green samphire bed
He picked her up, and swiftly fled:

And swiftly up the slopes that lead
To where the sheep in silence feed
All through the night, he fled until
He reached the top of Cissbury Hill:

And there great stag's-horn beetles went
Whizz-buzzing off in wonderment;
But friendly glowworms bravely shone
To guide his flying footsteps on.

And, as he came to Highden coomb,
Kind nightingales sang through the gloom
To charm a snarling fox, who stood
To watch him entering Muntham Wood.

No nymph or satyr seemed about,
And not one dryad peeped from out
Low-hanging boughs, nor could he hear
The sound of any piping near,

As to his favourite chestnut tree
He took his treasure from the sea,
And laid her in his foxglove bower
Upon his heap of mint in flower.

And there, until the end of night,
He leaned above her face so white,

Imagining what thoughts she kept
Beneath her eyelids while she slept.

And when the sun began to spread
The light of morning overhead,
He never moved ; and through the day
He never turned his eyes away.

But when the sun went down the west,
And owls resumed their nightly quest,
He sighed, and bowed his shaggy head
Beside the fragrant mint-flower bed.

And, slowly, terror, dark and grim,
Came, with the nightfall, over him :
" *Will you for ever sleep ?* " he cried—
" *Awake, awake, my fair sea-bride !* "

But no—her eyelids, whiter far
Than buds of water-lilies are,
Refused to let his love surprise
The guarded secrets of her eyes.

Star after star came shining through
Their fading deeps of cloudless blue,
Till, glorious from her repose,
The Queen of Night again arose.

Then, from beyond the swaying pines
And trailing honeysuckle bines,
He heard the distant seafolk call,
"*Bring back the fairest of us all!*"

And every wind in passing by
Left in his ears the far-off cry,
"*O, satyr of the chestnut trees,*
Bring back the flower of all the seas!"

And soon he heard the angry roar
Of fierce waves breaking on the shore;
And louder, louder grew the sound
In all the leafy world around.

"*I dare not keep her here,*" he sighed,
"*She sleeps, and will not be my bride—*
Ah, woe is me; for her dear sake
My heart for evermore must ache!"

And from his bed of mint in flower,
And from his fragrant foxglove bower
He carried her, who slept so well
Beneath her strange, unearthly spell.

And no one saw or heard him go
Along the wood, and out below

The oaks and elms, and through the coomb
Between the flowering furze and broom,

And up the white chalk-tracks to where
Thyme blossoms sweeten all the air,
And raspberry canes to fruitage grow,
Defying all the winds that blow.

And on, and on, with head low-bent,
Past clumps of juniper he went,
Till he beheld, along the sea,
A white mermaiden company.

"*I bring your sister back,*" he cried;
"*She sleeps, and will not be my bride:
O, may some happier lover find
Her not for ever so unkind!*"

And sadly, with reluctant hands,
He placed her on the moonlit sands,
And stood among the sea-pinks near
Until he saw her disappear.

And as the water closed above
The loveliness beyond his love,
And crested waves arose and fell,
He cried aloud, "*Farewell, farewell!*"

And soon, with all his fond hopes fled,
With empty arms and downcast head
He crept away, to come no more
For dancing on the smooth sea-floor.

And often now when roisterers shout
Through Muntham Wood, and round about,
He goes where nightingales forlorn
Sing with their breasts against a thorn.

And to this day his foxglove bower
Enshrines a heap of mint in flower;
But none of all the woodfolk know
The reason why he loves it so.

A SUSSEX CALL-NOTE

COME, our old mate, come back to us again—
So long, so long, you leave us all forlorn!
The hazel-nuts are slipping in the lane,
Too ripe and sweet for any man to scorn—
Come, our old mate, we must and will complain!
We tapped some last year's cider yesterday;
To-morrow we shall thrash the walnut tree—
O, we will feast you, if you come this way,
On custard pies, and cakes, and frumenty,
And give you all our shares
Of jellied quince, and luscious William pears!

We've never had such apples here before;
And plumper filbert-kernels never grew!
And on the grape-vine by the garden door
We still have left a goodly bunch or two—

Come, our old mate, for you is all our
    store!
  For you the medlars soften, one by one,
And frequently on fresh clean straw are
    laid;
  For you the bottled gooseberries are
    done,
And currant wine and damson cheese are
    made—
We will not think it true
That country sweets are no more sweet to
    you!

THE FLIGHT OF SANDPIPERS

ABOVE Newhaven quay,
A cloud came in from the sea
To turn in the sun's bright shining
And reveal its silver lining.

ROMANY SONGS

I. The Ancestral Secret

MY father and mother both hid from
me
The Wonderful Story of Rômany;
And my forehead was signed with the
Christian sign
To quiet this Romany blood of mine.

But the Bird of the Secret flew in from the
wild
And told me that I was a Romany child;
And my blood began dancing through
every vein
As the Wonderful Story grew mine again.

O I swear, by the crowns of the Wandering
Kings,
That my blood shall run true to the
Ancient Things;
And the life I will live is the life of the free,
For my heart is the heart of a Romany!

II. Kings of the Road

ON the day when the sun goes pop,
And the earth is here no more,
The Romany race may stop—
But not one minute before!

They are native in every land;
And free as the winds are they,
For God's is the only hand
That can take their charter away.

III. The Songs from Below

WHEN the forest paths are silent,
And the moon is full and clear,
The songs of Little Egypt
Are the sweetest songs to hear.

I listen in the hollows,
Where the shadows wrap me round,
To the songs of Little Egypt
Breathing softly from the ground.

IV. The House of Bondage

I LIVE in a house of four walls and a
roof,
And I keep from my Romany kindred
aloof,
For a fall-back am I from the Kings of the
Road,
And I dare not return to my ancient abode
Out-of-doors.

I mope and I moil for my clothes and my
bread,
For a floor for my feet and a roof for my
head;
But, O, I am proud of my kinsmen who
roam
Without any home, and yet ever at home
Out-of-doors!

And now and again I am called, and I know
Who is waiting, and where, and right
gladly I go;
And I laugh and I drink and I dance and
I sing,
And my heart is as light as a bird's on the
wing
Out-of-doors!

V. The Call of the Blood

FROM far-off hills and far-off plains
  A wild cry comes to me:
"*The blood of kings is in your veins—*
  The kings of Romany!"

I hear a homing heron pass
  Along the moonless night;
I hear a hedgehog in the grass;
  I see a glowworm's light.

I hear an owl's *tuwhit-tuwhoo*;
  I hear a landrail creak;
I hear a dove, or pigeon, coo;
  I hear a field-mouse squeak:

I see deft wires and springes set
  And marked by cunning hands;
I see the dusky princes get
  Their tribute from their lands;

And all about the pleasant earth
  I see their camp-fires shine,
And hear the songs of royal mirth
  That never may be mine.

From white chalk roads and green wood
lanes
A sad cry comes to me:
"*The blood of kings is in your veins—*
The kings of Romany!"

ALONE IN ST. CLEMENT'S CAVES AT HASTINGS

NO voice of man or beast or bird
In this dark solitude is heard :
So still it is, that, all around,
The silence makes a mighty sound.

WHEN LOVERS LOSE

WHEN lovers lose
Sight, sound, and touch
Of that which lent
Them their encouragement,
What should they choose
To make amends for such—
Should they with sighs and tears
Tell out the lonely years?

No: that would be
Mere evidence
To prove that they
Are those who think they pay
Love's golden fee
With ordinary pence;
And have an owner's right
To touch, and sound, and sight.

Oysters make pearls
Of alien things;
In amber clear
Dead insects still appear;

Vainly to churls
The gentle poet sings,
But no wild flood can rise
To drown the dove that flies.

In loneliness,
God's listener hears
The still small voice
Whisper within, "*Rejoice;*
You are not less
To Me than all the spheres:
The worm that haunts the grave
Goes down to lift and save!"

The tranquil pool
A stone disturbs
But faintly shows
Its heed of him who throws
To break the cool,
Deep peace below the herbs
And flowers and clustering sedge
Of its encircling edge.

No single star
May cease to shine
Because the sun
Is the prevailing one:

Their orders are
To await the day's decline,
When darkness of the night
Shall reinstate their light.

And where is set
The sun-parched place
A shower of rain
Will not refresh again ?
And where is yet
The mighty conquering race
Too strong to fail in breath
Before the hush of Death ?

The little birds
Have laws to keep,
And sing in rhyme
To God's appointed time ;
And even herds
Of cows, and flocks of sheep,
Have known, since they began,
Wisdom untaught by man.

And poppies know
How, in the bud,
To make a dress
Of crimson loveliness ;

While lilies show
How, from decay and mud,
White purity may gleam
On a polluted stream.

In God's employ,
To God's own plan,
Creation moves
In its unchanging grooves ;
And love and joy
Are here for every man :
A tiny ant may see
More of this truth than we.

When lovers lose
Sight, sound, and touch
Of that which lent
Them their encouragement,
What should they choose
To make amends for such ?
The silent winter prayer
Trees pray when they are bare.

DAISIES IN THE GRASS

I WONDER what each steadfast eye
Beholds while gazing at the sky.

THE PLACE OF FAREWELL

A South African Legend

ONE lovelorn evening, long ago,
A lover's tears bedewed the ground
Where miners since have dug, and found
Most precious diamonds below.

THE FAITHFUL ROSE TREE

ENCHANTMENTS of the nightingale
Shall not prevail
To make my lonely heart disclose
Another rose
Until I hear my lover's voice
Calling upon me to rejoice.

My brothers and my sisters stand
On either hand
Revealing unto sun and shower
Flower after flower;
But I all blandishments disdain,
Knowing my faith is not in vain.

Who is my lover? Why has he
So slighted me?
Ask on; I will not answer you—
But he is true!
And that sweet wisdom is a part
Of all the roses in my heart.

A COW AT SULLINGTON

SHE leaves the puddle where she drinks,
And comes toward the roadway bar
And looks into our eyes, and thinks
What curious animals we are!

THE GREY DAY

BECAUSE the sun had stayed so long
  In far, cloud-hidden places,
The sunflowers quite forgot which way
  To turn their golden faces;
And all the garden seemed to wait
In sympathy with their estate.

'Twas so until Cecilia from
  The terrace path descended,
When every sunflower turned to her
  And found its trouble ended;
And all the garden seemed to know
The queen of beauty walked below.

THE SEVEN SISTERS OF BIRLING GAP

WHITE cliffs, white cliffs, how white you are above the sea!
White cliffs, white cliffs, how white you are below the sky!
Seven cliffs so white, so white between
The sky so blue, the sea so green!

At sunset, when the shore was free
To rest from the unresting sea,
I saw seven ladies come and go,
Seven ladies walking to and fro.

Each time they passed me, hand in hand,
I saw no footmarks on the sand;
They seemed to walk upon the air,
Leaving no footmarks anywhere.

I watched them walking to and fro
Until the dark began to grow;
And then, in silent beauty, they
Walked out of sight across the bay.

White cliffs, white cliffs, how white you are
above the sea!
White cliffs, white cliffs, how white you are
below the sky!
Seven cliffs so white, so white between
The sky so blue, the sea so green!

BREAKERS AT BIRLING GAP

THE wild white horses of the sea,
Held back from where they used to be,
May yet escape from bit and rein
To gallop over the Downs again.

HOME FROM SEA

Sailor John speaks—

" ROSES, tap her window-pane—
 Gwendolen, my dear!
Roses, tap it once again—
 Gwendolen, Gwendolen!
Your true love is waiting here,
Gwendolen, my dear!

" Roses round her window-pane,
 Softly, sweetly peep!"

The Roses reply—

" *Sailor John, you wait in vain,*
 She's asleep, she's asleep:
Some one tells her every day
All that you would say."

Sailor John speaks—

" Myrtles, tap her window-pane—
  Gwendolen, my dear !
Myrtles, tap it once again—
  Gwendolen, Gwendolen !
Your true love is waiting here,
Gwendolen, my dear !

" Myrtles round her window-pane,
  Softly, sweetly peep ! "

The Myrtles reply—

" Sailor John, you wait in vain,
  She's asleep, she's asleep,
With a gold ring on her hand :
Now you understand."

CHURCH BELLS HEARD IN A STORM OFF SHOREHAM BAR

THROUGH fitful gusts of wind and rain
I heard them faintly, sweetly ring—
As if some door where angels sing
Unclosed, to quickly close again.

MILKING-TIME AT A WEALDEN FARM

COME, pretty Phyllis, you are late!
The cows are crowding at the gate:
An hour, or more, the sun has set;
The stars are out; the grass is wet;
The glowworms shine; the beetles hum;
The moon is near—come, Phyllis, come!

The black cow thrusts her brass-tipped horns
Among the quick and bramble-thorns;
The red cow jerks the padlock-chain;
The dun cow shakes her bell again;
And round and round the service-tree
The white cow bellows lustily.

The wistful nightingales complain
From bush to bush along the lane
The stockdoves coo from fir to fir,
And cannot sleep because of her:
The eve-jars crake on every side—
O Phyllis! where do you abide?

Now faeries, fays, elves, goblins, go
And find out where she lingers so,
And pinch her nose and chin and ears—
Nor heed her cries, nor heed her tears—
At any farm 'twould be a crime
To be so late at milking-time!

FEBRUARY SONG

YOUNG Spring begins to stretch himself—
I see his bedclothes moving;
So, now old Winter's on the shelf,
We'll watch the days improving.

Both ice and snow begin to thaw,
And streams begin to toddle,
And many a tree begins to draw
The ichor to its noddle.

And through the roots of flowers below
There moves a sweet confusion,
Which, snowdrops are the first to show,
Will come to one conclusion.

MARCH MORNING SONG UNDER HER BEDROOM WINDOW

SPRING is in the air, my dear,
  Spring is in the air!
A speckled thrush, high on his bough,
Was first to break the news; and now
A shining blackbird screeches out
To spread the tidings all about—
  Spring is in the air!

Love is in the air, my dear,
  Love is in the air!
You're in your nightgown still, I see,
And peeping round the blind at me;
While my poor heart goes pit-a-pat
Just like a bird's that sees a cat—
  Love is in the air!

SUSSEX THRUSHES IN APRIL

SUSSEX thrushes are great chaps!
They sing the whole day long:
In spite of all our dire mishaps
They never stop their song;
And much of humour they display,
And such a roguish eye,
As, "*Dirty, dirty, dirty!*" they
Continually do cry.

And when they step from bush or tree
To take the sunny air,
Their spotted waistcoats seem to me
The very smartest wear;
Indeed, no dandy prince or peer
Or leading actor shows
More perfect taste, nor more sincere
Self-conscious grace of pose.

The blackbirds envy them, I know,
Because they never stay
Where thrushes swagger to and fro,
But always fly away;

And yet their glossy, well-cut coats,
  And golden beaks, are such,
That all the Bank of England's notes
  For them would not be much.

THE GUELDER-ROSE TREE IN MOONLIGHT

NOW, who has hung my favourite tree
With pom-poms of white silk for me?

CUCKOO DAY IN SUSSEX

THE daybreak glimmers
And shivers and shimmers,
Shivers and shimmers in purple and gold
Where the sun-horses chafe in the sun-god's hold
Just over the eastern Downs,
Till the flash of their bits and their harness-chains
And the lightnings tied into their tails and manes
Shoots over the Wealden towns,
Shoots on to the Cowfold monastery spire,
Shoots out to the sweeps of Chiltington mill,
To Tennyson's windows on Aldworth hill,
And the sky of the neighbouring shire.

Then Aurora, the sun's
Rosy handmaiden, runs
With a basket of fruit blossoms poised on her head—
Green ones and pink ones and white ones and red—

And, with both hands uplifted, soon
scatters them wide
Through gardens and orchards on every
side—
Such abundance,
Redundance,
On every side,
Of blossoms for apples and damsons and
cherries,
For currants and gooseberries, pears,
plums, and strawberries,
That many a labourer breaks into song
For the wonderful fruit season coming
along!

And violets raise their fragrant heads
To return sweet thanks for their winter
beds;
And primroses look for the ministering
bee;
And blackthorns bloom whiter than bygone
snow;
And swallows skim in from across the
sea
To seek the old homes of their long
ago:
And folks declare
That at Heathfield Fair

A hook-nosed hag,
With her pate in a clout,
Lets the cuckoo fly out
From her fairing-bag;
But where she comes from, and where she
    goes,
Nobody knows, nobody knows.

And all the earth is glad once more,
  And all the sky is blue;
And Youth is just as young as before,
  And Love is just as true;
And boys and girls together sing,
In a ring-o'-roses ring,
"*March winds and April showers*
Bring forth May flowers!"

And here and there
And everywhere,
And over the hills and far away,
The cuckoo calls throughout the day,
"*Cuckoo! cuckoo! cuckoo!*"

A KINGFISHER'S FLIGHT BY SHELLEY'S POND AT WARNHAM

ONE flash of blue, and all the sky
Seemed, for a moment, passing by!

THE WINCHELSEA EMBROIDERER

AT the open window of her room,
She sews, with many-coloured threads,
On milk-white linen, every bloom
  She gathers from her garden-beds;
  With rows of minstrel cherubs' heads
Above a Tyrian purple flame
Which burns in circles round her name—

Her old Greek name, Persephone,
  Enclosed with sacred vestal fire,
And laughing cherubs; each to be,
  In turn, the leader of her choir;
  Each, with his dulcimer or lyre,
To play to her old Eden airs
Across her gay silk-sewn parterres.

Her head is bowed as angels may
  Bow theirs to crystal arras frames;
Or over golden lutes, to play
  For children fresh from Earth, whose
    games
  Have still the old familiar names;

Or in their reverence when they hear
God's footsteps in the garden near.

I wonder, looking on her there,
And looking in her pensive face,
What lover may arrive, and dare
The changing of this quiet place
From all its old accustomed grace
For her who now tells out the hours
In her embroidering of flowers.

Solomon's seal, forget-me-not,
Love-in-a-mist, and mignonette,
And every blossom in the plot
Of her most lovely sewing set,
A thousand years may pass, and yet,
Charmed by her hands, you still may show
How flowers in threads of silk may blow.

EARLY MORNING MEADOW SONG

NOW some may drink old vintage wine
  To ladies gowned with rustling silk,
But we will drink to dairymaids,
  And drink to them in rum and milk—
O, it's up in the morning early,
  When the dew is on the grass,
And St. John's bell rings for matins,
  And St. Mary's rings for mass!

The merry skylarks soar and sing,
  And seem to Heaven very near—
Who knows what blessed inns they see,
  What holy drinking songs they hear?
O, it's up in the morning early,
  When the dew is on the grass,
And St. John's bell rings for matins,
  And St. Mary's rings for mass!

The mushrooms may be priceless pearls
  A queen has lost beside the stream;
But rum is melted rubies when
  It turns the milk to golden cream!

O, it's up in the morning early,
  When the dew is on the grass,
And St. John's bell rings for matins,
  And St. Mary's rings for mass!

MOZART'S "ANDANTE FOR FOUR HANDS"

O WOULD I were a fowler kind,
  With nets of magic strings,
That I might snare each note, and bind
  Its swift, far-flying wings!

TANNHAUSER'S GADFLY

THE STORY OF AN OLD TRIPTYCH, PAINTED ON GILDED CHICKEN-SKIN

BEHIND the pilgrims' House of Rest,
Where laurels made the terrace shady,
I knelt and told my beads before
The garden image of Our Lady.

Sometimes the June winds turned the leaves
To let the sunshine light her face,
While wrens and linnets never ceased
Their sweet *Hail Marys!* round the place.

And peaceful beauty gave me there
The healing touch of ancient kings,
When, lo, beside Christ's mother stood
A naked, laughing boy, with wings!

One hand held out a golden bow,
The other held a golden dart,
And there and then he aimed and shot
The tiny weapon through my heart.

I dropped my beads upon the grass,
Reproaching every bird that sang,
And left the laurel-nestled shrine
Just as the bell for vespers rang.

And when I met a certain maid
I covered up my wounded breast,
And passed the time of day to her
More gaily than to all the rest.

And in the tavern cool and sweet,
Where every ghost becomes a clown,
I drank more wine and sang more songs
Than any tippler in the town.

SIR CHARLES OF HIGHDEN

HIS grave is under a big yew tree;
And now it may be known
How kind he was to the brown-eyed boy
He used to meet alone—
The brown-eyed boy he used to meet
Alone on the lonely Down,
When the sun was glinting the Channel sea,
And the roofs of Worthing town.

There they together would crouch and watch
The distant ships go by,
Till the setting sun made the clouds above
Like roses in the sky;
And many a tale of the Spanish Main
The listening boy would hear,
As the red cloud-roses died away,
And the darkness-time drew near.

Then the man would bid the boy good-
night,
And light his pipe, and go;
And the boy would sniff the fragrant
smoke
From the furze-hid path below,
And wonder why it should smell so sweet,
When the pipes of other men
Smelt more like the tan-yard at Storrington,
Or a Steyning market pen.

And then he would try to put sea-legs on,
And walk with a sailor's stride
Past the clump of trees on the crest of the
hill,
And low on the other side
Till he came to the thickets of raspberry
canes
By the foss the Romans made,
To guard their camp against Sussex men
In the days when they felt afraid.

Then the hedgerow beyond would seem to
be
Where the Jolly Roger flew;
And the air would be filled with the
dreadful shouts
Of a cut-throat pirate crew;

And men would pray, and women scream,
As they walked the awful plank
Above where boughs of juniper closed
On the places where they sank.

But the boy would soon jump for joy to see
A ship of the English fleet
Come swiftly along from the Shoreham gap,
And up from the Washington street;
And the pirates, drinking their horns of rum,
Would be taken by surprise,
And the English would hang them up in chains
Before his very eyes.

And when the good English sailors cried,
"Come here, my boy, come here
And help yourself to the pirates' gold
That soon will disappear!"
They always laughed, both loud and long,
As if at some royal joke,
When he only asked for a golden pipe
For his friend Sir Charles to smoke.

Then sailors and ships would vanish away
In the dark of the hedgerow lane,
And the old brown owl in the old thatched barn
Would screech as if mad with pain;

And the boy would rush to his own house
door,
And his mother would start with fright
To see such a little uncanny face
Come in from the outside night.

And once she said, "*You have been with
Sir Charles,
And I wish you wouldn't, my dear;
He comes from a stock both wild and
strange,
And not very good, I fear—
God knows it isn't for me to judge
What the doings of men may mean;
But a mother knows when her little son
Comes from where he shouldn't have
been.*"

And, close beside him, she watched him eat
His hunk of raisin cake,
And sip warm milk from a black ware
mug
Of the old-time Sussex make:
And when he had finished, she took a
lamp
And followed him up the stairs;
And sat in the chair beside his bed
To hear him say his prayers.

And when she had carefully tucked him up,
  And kissed him and bless'd him so,
He whispered, "*Dear mother, I love Sir*
    Charles;
  Don't tell me not to go!"
And then as she smiled and said, "*Very*
    well,"
  He smiled his thanks back to her;
And when she had gone out of hearing,
    exclaimed,
  "*Good night, and God bless you, sir!*"

TO A THRUSH CRACKING A SNAIL'S SHELL

IT troubles me, my speckled friend,
To know your voice, so sweet,
Must, for its liquid notes, depend
On such strange things to eat!

A CATERPILLAR'S APOLOGY FOR EATING A FAVOURITE GLADIOLUS

CONFUSE me not with impious things;
But wait for the appointed hour
When you shall see your vanished flower
Reborn resplendent in my wings!

TRIOLET OF A TROJAN

After the Wooden Horse Incident

THERE sometimes comes to me a moment when
I'd like to stand behind myself, and kick!
I don't know how it is with other men:
There even comes to me a moment when
I'd like to stand quite near myself, and then
Throw straight at my own head a good-sized brick!
And every man should have his moments when
He'd like to stand behind himself, and kick!

THE CRIME OF IMOGEN

"Fold down the leaf where I have left"
Cymbeline, Act II, Scene ii

O IMOGEN, you turned down leaves—
A most disgraceful thing to do!
Books have worse enemies than thieves.
O Imogen, you turned down leaves!
And every honest bookman grieves
That such a crime is laid to you.
O Imogen, you turned down leaves—
A most disgraceful thing to do!

LAMENT OF AN OLD SUSSEX HARVEST-BOTTLE IN THE BRIGHTON MUSEUM

HERE in this case I stand for show,
  And never may be filled again
With ale, to strengthen men who go
  To gather in the golden grain :
O, pity me, in my distress
Of dry and dusty emptiness !

I call to mind the shady nooks
  Where I was once the well-filled one,
And long for all the thirsty looks
  Of reapers sweating in the sun ;
While they who care not, stand and gape,
Or talk of my " delightful " shape.

The man who made my belly round
  Might weep to see his bottle fail,
But he is long since underground ;
  And lacks, like me, good Sussex ale :
Both men and bottles, soon or late,
Must reach their dry and dusty state.

THE DEATH OF OPHELIA

"*SWEET Robin is a dainty boy—*"
  I knew it long ago:
"*Sweet Robin is my only joy—*"
  And that is all I know.

My brother heard me say my prayers:
  My father told the queen:
And I . . . he passed me on the stairs
  When I was dressed in green.

I hid behind the dead king's throne—
  His grave was deep, and long . . .
"*If sin it be to sleep alone,*
  Pray ease me of my wrong!"

I found a wall-tree apricot,
  As ripe as ripe could be;
And then he stole my honey-pot,
  That was so dear to me!

They reel with Rhenish late to bed :
  I tell my beads for hours.
Red roses blossom overhead :
  Red roses fall in showers.

Nay, lords and ladies, do not jest ;
  I hear a passing-bell :
" *God, speed her soul to Mary's breast,*
  And then 'twill all be well ! "

" *And two at head, and two at feet . . .* "
  The sky is far away . . .
Blue violets die . . . and all so sweet . . .
  Ah, well ! . . . ah ! . . . well-a-day !

FALLEN WILLOW LEAVES FLOATING DOWN-STREAM AT STOPHAM BRIDGE

THEY hurry, as we,
To an unknown sea.

SALATHIEL PAVY

WE know him of the Chapel Royal,
And therefore of the stage,
In that sweet century, that golden age
Of perfect song, when men were loyal
To lute and virginal, and caught, with ease,
The lilt and liquid flow
God's intimate poets of the trees
Now only know.

He was an actor child, who played
Old men so seeming true
That Death was taken in, became afraid
Of forfeiting a debt long due,
And, heedless of the audience of the show,
Rushed in upon the scene
And claimed from him, whose years we know
Were scarce thirteen!

Ben Jonson sang his funeral song—
A song still wet with tears,
Though he who sung it sleeps in dust along
The passage of three hundred years.

Ben never sang with richer sweetness, nor
  To such a holy end
As when he sang in sorrow for
  His little friend.

THE OLD "UMBRELLA FIR TREE" ON THE STEYNING ROAD FROM WASHINGTON

BESIDE this gnarled, distorted tree,
My mother used to sing to me;
And still its scented branches make
Soft, ghostly music for her sake.

THE IDEALIST

HE looked so beautiful, and strong;
And in his voice some holy song
Had left its golden tones:
But as he stood, with Christlike grace,
The red blood trickled down his face
From well-aimed sticks and stones.

Spat on, and mocked, he never turned
From those materialists who yearned
To tear him limb from limb;
Though in his eyes the blood and sweat
With every kind of road-filth met,
And almost blinded him.

Pinned down by many ruthless grips,
One great brute smote him on the lips,
While others laughed aloud
To see him slowly limp away,
Half dead, but still with strength to say,
"*God bless you,*" to the crowd.

A VOICE FROM A GRAVE.

O YOU of that footfall above-ground,
pray listen to me!
Stop! Are you a young man, a singer,
with love in your eyes—
A young man, a singer, with pity and love
in your eyes?
I have waited and wearied for you, if at
last you are he.

What singers are now in the world? and
what songs do they sing?
Do they know that I sang—do they keep
any song that was mine?
Do they care that I sang—do they love
any song that was mine?
O, tell me now, young man, young singer,
what news do you bring?

A GARDENER'S EPITAPH

(Killed in France, December 1916)

By self and worldliness constrained,
How often men have entertained
  An angel unawares!
And never more so than when he,
For whom this epitaph is made,
Worked here on earth with hoe and spade;
Loving a gardener's many cares
  With all humility.

So simple in his thought and taste,
He harboured nothing that would waste
  Life's precious hours;
And in whatever garden path he trod,
He seemed as one who walked and talked
    with God
  Among sweet flowers;
And was of those who, in God's open air,
Perceive the Sacramental Presence every-
    where,
Till they can look a lily in the face
  Without a fear of shame.

Frank Bush, his name;
Thaxted, his dwelling-place.

God rest his soul, and take
His wife and child in keeping for his sake

A DEVONSHIRE EPITAPH

HE made, through shot and shell,
  His last advance,
And bravely, nobly fell
  Somewhere in France.

Now we acclaim him through
  His native Devon
A hero, staunch and true,
  Somewhere in Heaven.

ELEGY FOR EDWARD THOMAS

(LATE LIEUTENANT, ROYAL GARRISON ARTILLERY)

SOMEWHERE within my brain is set
A memory that I now forget;
A memory that was once the key
To secrets now unknown to me.

Elusive as the unusual taste
Persimmons give, or as the haste
A particle of mercury shows,
Now seems my soul in what it knows.

And worthy terms of love and praise
For you, my friend of singing days,
Go, like reflections from a pond,
Or like horizons, yet beyond.

But as a little fledgling bird
In its beginning hears the Word;
And as a barren almond rod
Perceives the blossoming touch of God;

And as a daisy's opening flower
Springs from its root's subconscious power
To fashion beauty as before,
And raise it to the light once more,

So, where things unforgotten stay,
Fair golden numbers have their way,
And lift and bear their burden through
With very tender thoughts of you.

The clods of battlefields are red
With immortality: the dead
In their magnificence arise
To shine before us through the skies.

And miracles of heavenly mirth
In all the trees and plants on earth
Rebuke from every flower and leaf
Man's vain impertinence of grief.

And feathered birds, and fishes finned,
And clouds and rain and calm and wind,
And sun and moon and stars, declare
All life is one life, everywhere;

That nothing dies to die for good
In clay or dust, in stone or wood,
But only rests awhile, to keep
Life's ancient covenant with Sleep.

It seems, dear mate of lanes and fields,
Death takes no more than what he yields;
For not one coin of Autumn's gold
Is lost when Spring's account is told.

The lily pool which you and I,
With Dyall and Davies, lingered by
One quiet evening long ago,
Is sprinkled now with blackthorn snow;

And still the bright-eyed water-voles
Come bravely from their mud-bank holes,
And never doubt me as I stand
To watch them from the beetling land.

And, once again, I seem to see
You stoop beneath the service-tree,
And then come back to us to twist
A silvery slowworm round your wrist.

Much goes the same as when you made
Cool drinks for us, and in the shade
Behind your lilacs, filled the long
June afternoons with whimsy song.

O, I could weep for bygone years!
But memories grow too sweet for tears;
And that which was can never end
While memories last, my gentle friend.

As from a chrysalis we see
The lovely butterfly set free,
From our dead bodies dead men's eyes
May see our deathless souls arise.

PALLIDA MORS

ON her cold, white bed,
May is lying . . . dead.

"*My May,*"
I have often said.

Now her soul has fled
  Away;
And I can but spread
Violets round her head
  To-day.

Everywhere to-day
I can hear her say,
  "*Dear love,*
I have flown away
Like a homing grey
  Ring-dove."

Kneel with me, and pray
God to bless my May
  Above.

THINGS ONCE SHARED WITH ANOTHER

WHITE cliffs above a foam-flecked sea;
Old avenues of flowering limes;
Old sun-dials; jasmin-scented tea;
Old long-case clocks with mellow chimes;
The first awakenings of Spring;
The wistful thoughts old memories bring;
Rock-crystal images; black pearls,
And veils of Hindu dancing-girls;
Old pleasure fairs on village greens;
The singing haunts of nightingales,
And fortunes told by gipsy queens,
And Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales":
Shadow of shadows, these we shared.

The beauty of a sea-gull's flight;
The crescent moon; wave-rippled sand
The wonder of a glowworm's light;
Old South Down dew-ponds; well-ploughed land;
Primroses, fresh from passing showers;
Catalpa groves; blue chicory flowers;

A fountain glistening in the sun,
And junkets stirred with cinnamon;
A vixen and her cubs at play;
  White birch-tree woods; a clover field,
And adders stowing their young away,
  And sunset clouds across the Weald:
Shadow of shadows, these we shared.

A frosty sky close-packed with stars;
  Old flag-stoned courts where lilacs blow;
Old lemon-yellow porcelain jars;
  The moonshine songs of old Li Po;
Old well-heads from old Umbrian wells;
Old tiny brass pagoda bells;
Old Japanese kaleidoscopes,
And ikons bless'd by Russian popes;
Old egg-shell china, light as air;
  Old Persian mats; old Spanish fans;
And jugs of old black Sussex ware,
  And old pibrochs of Scottish clans:
Shadow of shadows, these we shared.

Fritillaries in old Oxford fields;
  Elizabethan lutes and songs;
Old gargoyles; old heraldic shields;
  Old Irish harps; old Burmese gongs;
A harvest wagon piled with sheaves;
The silvery skeletons of leaves;

Old miniatures ; old silhouettes,
And old Castilian castanets ;
Old green-glaze pitchers ; trellised vines ;
  Owls hooting in old trees at dusk,
And Sussex mead and home-made wines,
  And garden darkness sweet with musk
Shadows of shadows, these we shared.

Old tapestries ; old inlaid swords ;
  Old chapels where dead kings repose ;
Old virginals ; old clavichords ;
  Old Punch and Judy puppet-shows ;
June nights in deck-chairs on the lawn,
The expectant hush before the dawn,
The sudden chorus of the birds,
And distant sounds of flocks and herds ;
Street walks to see strange faces pass ;
  The ritual play of pompous creeds,
And dear Walt Whitman's "Leaves of Grass,"
  And Pan-pipes made of Sussex reeds :
Shadow of shadows, these we shared.

Great antlers dropped by lordly stags ;
  Tipteerer plays ; old roadside inns ;
Dried lavender in silken bags ;
  Old water-mills ; old violins ;

Old straw-thatched roofs; deep window-
seats;
An Epstein bronze; the odes of Keats;
Yew hedges cut in antic shapes,
And English hot-house pines and grapes;
Old Norman keeps; old Gothic aisles;
Old ivory masks; New Zealand jade,
And floors of clear blue lustre tiles,
And echoes in a hollow glade:
Shadow of shadows, these we shared.

Old Sussex iron basket-grates;
Snapdragons in old crannied walls;
Crown Derby cups; old Swansea plates;
Welsh mountain pools and waterfalls;
The poise of hawks above their prey;
The skirl of bagpipes far away;
A garden tent of Shantung silk,
And bowls of fruit-juiced buttermilk;
Alaska totems; South Sea gods;
A dulcimer with silver strings,
And fragrant popping balsam-pods,
And old Hungarian peasant rings:
Shadow of shadows, these we shared.

Blue butterflies; a tulip tree;
Canadian maples turning red;
Attar of roses; pot-pourri;
A lily-of-the-valley bed;

Train-glimpses of Provençal farms ;
Old Chinese amulets and charms ;
Swans sailing up a meadow stream,
And strawberries dipped in clotted cream ;
A necklace that was Li Hung Chang's ;
  Fires on the hearth ; warm ingle-nooks,
And old Australian boomerangs,
  And pictured maps and herbal books :
Shadow of shadows, these we shared.

Tear-bottles from Egyptian tombs ;
  Conch shells that bring the ocean near ;
Gold lacquer screens ; oak-panelled rooms ;
  Quaint Christmas carols ; Christmas cheer ;
Spires tipped with gilded weather-vanes ;
Bell-horses heard in Sussex lanes ;
Cloud-shadow chasing on the Downs,
And jokes of travelling circus clowns ;
Carved amethysts ; cornelian seals ;
  Old gate-leg tables ; wheel-back chairs,
And old Tibetan praying-wheels,
  And gay old English dancing-airs :
Shadow of shadows, these we shared.

Clothes smelling sweet of orris-root ;
  Rooks cawing round far-up the sky ;
A quince tree with its golden fruit ;
  A darting emerald dragon-fly ;

Shy rabbits peeping from their holes ;
The pretty ways of water-voles ;
Madonna lilies set in tubs,
And brandy-snaps with sillabubs ;
Delphiniums ; fuchsias ; hollyhocks ;
  The laughter of a happy boy,
And gaged white linen Sussex smocks,
  And hazel-nuts, and travellers' joy :
Shadow of shadows, these we shared.

Icelandic sagas ; cattle runes ;
  Sunk gardens ; old lead lotus tanks ;
Old epitaphs ; old ballad tunes ;
  Old cedar trees ; soft mossy banks ;
Still days on lonely upland moors ;
Low tides on moonlit Sussex shores ;
Harebells on sunny Downs and crofts,
And apple feasts in stable lofts ;
A cowslip ball ; a daisy chain,
And aspens mimicking the rain ;
Flips ; possets ; marchpane ; simnel cakes ;
  Pears ; peaches ; mulberries ; greengage plums,
And pies with pastry all in flakes,
  And peonies, and chrysanthemums ;
Green figs ; green almonds ; crusted port,
And crocus-time at Hampton Court ;

Old milking-songs; old spells for churns;
Wild orchids; pasque-flowers; hart's-
tongue ferns;
Old drinking-horns with amber rims;
Old Coptic chants; old vesper hymns;
White roses on King Charles's Day,
And skylarks singing overhead,
And garlands on the First of May,
And curious talks about the dead:
Shadow of shadows, these we shared.

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